Parks & Recreation Council

Trap Pond State Park August 5, 2010 - 9:30a.m.

ATTENDANCE: Council Members

Ron Mears, Chairperson Brenda Bramble Deloris Donnelly
Andy Urquhart Ron Whittington Ron Breeding

Greg Johnson John Williams

Staff

Charles SalkinGreg AbbottBritt MurrayRay BivensPaul NicholsonWayne KlineBob EhemannMary VoshellEsther Knotts

Stacy Jones James Wagner

Visitors

Dorothy Miller Anne Allen

Council toured the new Nature Center at Trap Pond State Park, prior to calling the meeting to order.

I. <u>Call to Order/Announcements</u>

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

Chairman's Report – Ron Mears recently visited the Parks, was impressed, and commended staff for the great work they were doing.

Mr. Mears presented the Division's Employee of the Year, James Wagner, with a \$50.00 savings bond from the Council.

Mr. Mears congratulated Kim and Matt Chesser, Park's Environmental Program Administrator, on the birth of their son.

Mr. Mears congratulated Nicholas Roy, son of Andy Roy, Park Superintendent at Wilmington State Parks, on his fully paid, 4-year scholarship to Yale University.

Chazz Salkin spoke briefly about the \$1.5M Nature Center project. He congratulated Senator Venables on his championing the project. Once the Nature Center is complete, the facility will be utilized year round for personal and business meetings and events. A formal opening and dedication will take place in the fall.

Approval of minutes – Mr. Mears asked for a motion to approve the May 6, 2010 minutes as written. Andy Urquhart made the motion and Deloris Donnelly and Ron Breeding seconded it. By unanimous vote the minutes were approved.

II. Official Business/Council Activities: Council Member Reports

Fort Delaware: No report

Natural Areas Advisory Council: John Williams

The quarterly meeting was held on June 1, 2010. Because several members of the Council were absent from the meeting, there was not a quorum. The new guidelines for Natural Area designation are being presented to Secretary O'Mara for approval.

Cape Henlopen will be dedicated as a Nature Preserve soon.

The Council has recognized there are management issues. Ecologically fragile areas of Nature Preserves in State Parks need protection from users and staff. The Division needs ensure protection of sensitive areas in management plans.

<u>Bi-State Council for White Clay Creek Preserve</u>: Andy Urquhart The next meeting of the Council will take place in the fall.

The Division is working on a trail plan for White Clay Creek State Park. A portion of the plan includes the Preserve area. The Division shared a draft with the Council and the draft included plans for shared use trails.

The Delaware co-chairman of the Council conducted a survey of the Council and it was unanimous that the Council does not want to include new shared-use trails in the Preserve. The results of the survey were communicated to Susan Moerschel as a comment on the trail plan.

Chazz explained the process of planning trails and stated that a revised trail plan will be presented to the Bi-State Council at the next meeting. Once the plan has been reviewed by the Bi-State Council, the plan will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Council for review. A public meeting will follow.

Wildlife Management Committee: No report

Resident Curatorship Committee: Charles Salkin

Jim Hall was hired to fill the historian position. Jim has started working on curatorship and will continue moving the Division's efforts forward. An intern is working on taking pictures and updating the website.

The Division expects to receive an application for curatorship for the Lums Mill House soon.

There have been many inquiries regarding the Warrington House but no one is seriously interested at this time. There is a hole in the roof of the property. Paul Nicholson stated that it could be patched fairly inexpensively and that work will take place this fall.

III. Public Comment

Dorothy Miller presented the Council with a letter regarding the trail plan for White Clay Creek State Park. Ms. Miller summarized the letter to the Council and stated she was "shocked by the changes proposed in the White Clay Creek Trail Plan." Ms. Miller also commented that, "White Clay has been saved from the developers, now we need to save it from ourselves." She appealed to the Division to develop the Trail Plan with consideration and stated that, "we have to protect this area, and it's fragile."

Andy Urquhart stated as a representative of the Public and the White Clay Creek Friends, he agrees with Dorothy's comments. He voiced concerns about unnecessary trail development, the need for habitat protection, and the need for pedestrian-only trails. A lengthy discussion ensued.

John Williams questioned whether the White Clay Creek Preserve has been dedicated. Chazz stated that Natural Area status was a layer on the map that was being considered. He said he will take a closer look at the critical resources when he meets with the trail development team. John Williams stated that the State has a policy as to what qualifies as Natural Area. Andy said his perspective is that much of the area in White Clay Creek proposed for Natural Area protection is old growth forest. He said, however, that many critical bird species favor grasslands, scrub/shrub and younger forests (rather than old growth), and these areas also deserve protection, even if they contain more nonnative plant species.

Ron Breeding, as a representative of the Nemours Company, praised the Division on their ideas and efforts to make kids healthy. Ron said it was a pleasure to work with folks with the "professionalism of Parks staff" interested in "moving the agenda forward." Mr. Breeding

stated that, "Parks is taking the lead" in the effort to make kids healthy. He said doctors have started writing prescriptions to take walks in the park instead of medication. Mr. Breeding shared a Healthy Eating brochure with the Council.

IV. Staff Reports

Chazz Salkin: HB 106 passed. This bill reorganizes the review of the local grant program.

Chazz provided a brief summary of the Department's reorganization. Department and Division Organizational charts will be provided and a more detailed discussion will take place at the next meeting. Chazz stated there are no radical changes in either area. He stated that the Secretary has clustered all the programs and Divisions into three categories: an office of Natural Resources (includes Parks & Recreation, Soil and Water, and Fish and Wildlife), Office of Environmental Protection (includes Water Resources and Air & Waste Management), and the third cluster will encompass "all the forward-thinking major environmental and energy-related issues." Chazz explained the major change in the fiscal operation of the Department and stated that all of the accounting and fiscal people are working in one Department unit. Hopefully, this will result in efficiencies and the ability to reduce the investment in support services and allow the Department the ability to shift those resources in to critical programs where we have lost people and money. The goal of these changes is for everyone to work more closely together and to communicate more effectively.

This reorganization and the restructuring of the budget were unanimously adopted by the JFC. This will allow the Department to utilize funding differently and provide additional budget flexibility.

Section Updates

Office of Administration: Greg Abbott provided and discussed a handout (inserted below). Personnel Update:

John Lister was hired as an Enforcement Trainee at Cape Henlopen effective 5/23/2010. John graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Delaware. John has spent several seasons with the Division as a park patrol officer and also worked in enforcement at the University of Delaware.

Ermel "Bobbi" Knotts was hired as an Accounting Specialist in the Director's Office effective 5/23/2010. Bobbi transferred from the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Bobbi brings with her more than 40 years experience in the clerical and accounting fields, along with an in-depth knowledge and training on the PHRST, DFMS, and ORMS (state accounting) systems.

Adam Yeager was hired as an Enforcement Trainee at Killens Pond effective 6/7/2010. Adam has a Bachelor's Degree in Park and Resource Management from Slippery Rock University, more than eight years' experience in the Army National Guard, service as a park ranger in Yosemite National Park and as a park patrol officer with Delaware State Parks.

Lynn Klein was hired as the Assistant Zoo Manager at the Brandywine Zoo effective 6/7/2010. Lynn has a Bachelor's Degree in Parks and Recreation from Slippery Rock University and more than 20 years experience working in zoo settings. Lynn is a certified Veterinary Technician and has worked with a vast collection of animals in several different zoos.

Jim Smith Jr. was hired as a Conservation Technician at Bellevue effective 7/6/2010. Jim has spent the last two years working at the DNERR site as a seasonal conservation technician. Jim has 20 years' experience in equipment operation.

Steve Walters, Conservation Technician I at Alapocas Run State Park was hired as a Conservation Technician III at Wilmington State Parks effective 6/6/2010.

Lee Ann Azarewicz was hired as a Conservation Technician III at Alapocas Run State Park effective 6/14/2010.

Transfers:

Bruce Hannah, Conservation Technician III accepted a lateral transfer from Wilmington State Parks to White Clay Creek effective 4/4/2010.

Rich Green, Conservation Technician I accepted a lateral transfer from Bellevue State Park to Auburn Heights effective 4/4/2010.

Dorothy Sheehan, Trainer Educator II accepted a lateral transfer from Bellevue State Park to the Indian River Life Saving Station effective 7/7/2010.

Terminations / Retirements:

Ashlie Kozlowski, Trainer Educator at Cape Henlopen, resigned effective June 5.

Georgia Vaughan, Administrative Specialist II in the Central Office retired effective July 15 after 22 years of service with the Division.

Max Yealey, PPMTM III at Wilmington resigned effective July 31 to accept a position with the Department of Transportation.

Volunteer Program:

In FY 10, 7,536 volunteers contributed a record 152,751 hours, a 23% increase over the number contributed in FY 09. This equates to 78 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs).

The Division was notified by the Corporation for National and Community Service that we would not be awarded a competitive funding grant for our AmeriCorps Program. The program has been competitively funded since 2005, and was used to place year-long AmeriCorps members in parks as Volunteer Coordinators, Environmental Educators, and Historical Educators. In addition, the grant allowed us to place 40 summer members in our parks, providing critical assistance during the busiest season.

Changing priorities for funding of projects on the national level and the duration of our program led to this outcome. The Volunteer program has long recognized this as a possibility, and sustainability plans are in place. Specifically:

- 1. Engagement of long-term seasonal Volunteer Coordinators
- 2. Strengthening of Internship programs, with the possibility of adding a stipend payment to increase average required hours for each position.

The Division was awarded an AmeriCorps Service grant in the amount of \$118,000 for the summer of 2011. The grant, awarded by the Delaware Commission on National and Community Service, will be used to place 40 members in State Parks during the summer to work with environmental education and historical programming. Specifically, the members will assist at summer camps and reinforce the 5-2-1, Almost None Healthy Lifestyles prescription and engage youth in outdoor exercise as a remedy to overweight and obesity. The Division cash match for the program totals \$25,485. Cost per hour equals \$1.47.

The Division was awarded an AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) team. The team began work in state parks on Monday, July 19. The team is made up of nine members from the Perry Point Campus. They will be performing service work throughout the park system through the end of August (3,000 hours of service).

The Division also entered into a volunteer partnership with NCCC Summer of Service. Teams of at-risk youth from Maryland will travel to Parks in Northern Delaware to perform service projects

throughout July and during the first week of August. The teams of six youth and three NCCC members will contribute a combined total of 900 hours of service. On Friday, July 29th, the entire three team total of 30 members camped and performed service at Killens Pond State Park. This meets three of our Division's objectives: Children and Nature, Attracting New Visitors and Volunteer Service.

On July 15th, 120 youth from grades 1-8 from the La Casita Summer Learning Program administered by First State Community Action Agency attended a Volunteer Service Day at Cape Henlopen. Coordinated by Amanda Deschenes, the Regional Volunteer Coordinator, the participants divided into teams and performed a beach cleanup. They toured the park, engaged in activities, and enjoyed the beach. Tee-shirts and info packets where distributed, which included 5-2-1, Almost None information. Particularly of note:

- 1. When polled, only six of the children had ever been to Cape Henlopen State Park
- 2. The entire group was made up of 105 Hispanic and 15 African American participants from Georgetown.
- 3. The event was immensely successful, and the group is already planning a return visit.

At the Delaware State Fair, Governor Jack Markell, Secretary Collin O'Mara and Director Charles Salkin recognized the Timberland Factory Outlet in Rehoboth Beach with a special volunteer service award. For the last four years, Store Manager Donna Flomp has coordinated more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time including maintenance of beaches, trails, parking lots and courtyards, and performed a variety of tasks from repairing terrapin fences and scrubbing youth camp ovens to scraping, painting and power washing.

Ron Mears stated that he did not feel this year's fair display was as nice as in previous years. Greg explained that the Department's goal was to go paperless. He also said staff shortages may have affected the display.

Friends Organizations

The Division entered into an amended agreement with the Friends of Brandywine Creek State Park to help reorganize the group. Due to faltering membership enrollment, the organization recognized its inability to continue on present course. The Division signed an agreement, which authorizes the Division to act on behalf of the Friends to reconstitute the organization, acting under its by-laws. The agreement expires when the group is able to elect a slate of officers, has a membership of 15 members, and validates new governance policies. If this cannot be accomplished within one calendar year, a reevaluation will take place to determine progress and possibility / feasibility of continuing.

Toward this end, The Division is scheduling a meeting with nine committee members interested in helping the Division with this project. No Division staff will serve on the newly-formed Advisory Board. A good deal of energy and enthusiasm has been generated.

August 19 is the final All-Team meeting for the 2009-2010 AmeriCorps Team. The Summer Team added 42 members to the 22 full-time members serving in the Parks. The end-of-year paperwork, award presentations, and a social will take place at 4 p.m. at the Killens Pond Water Park. Please join us if you are able.

Publications & Marketing

The New Park Visitors Welcome Kit and Distribution:

The kits are doing well for our parks and for our partners. You will see them at practically every visitor's center and Chamber of Commerce in Delaware. Delaware State Parks will also be featured in the new I-95 rest area near the Rt. 896 exit. This is a beautiful building with some

great restaurants inside including a Starbucks and a Baja Fresh. The visitor's center will soon be showing a DSP commercial on their flat screens and our brochures and kits are already displayed and available.

Dover Downs Race Week:

An ad was placed in the "Outside the Oval" publication which is the official race weekend guide. There were over 30,000 guides distributed during race weekend. This was a very successful ad placement and Dawn Morris is working on a booth at Dover Downs for the upcoming races.

Summer Concert Series:

The Summer Concert Series is going strong, with record attendance at many venues. A radio campaign has gone very well over the last few weeks on Cool 101.7, LaExitosa and Eagle 97 and is also being promoted on ten different web sites.

Face Book & Twitter:

The Division has more than 1,300 fans. Samantha Hall continues to update Face-Book each day and is receiving a great response from the fans, who are continuing to interact daily by posting updates and staying connected to our site. We continue to expand our network on Twitter. With more than 300 followers on Twitter now, we are able to inform our followers about great programs, important parks news, and upcoming events.

Web Promotions and Awareness:

AmeriCorps member Amanda Strouse has been busy promoting Delaware State Parks on as many FREE websites as possible. This enables the Division to become more visible on the web. It also allows state park venues, services, and special events to come up more often when people are using search engines such as Google to search for information.

Delaware State Parks Father's Day Sponsorship at the Blue Rocks Game:

On June 20th, Delaware State Parks was the proud host of the Fathers Day Blue Rocks game in Wilmington. The first 1,000 people received a golf umbrella with the DSP logo. The Division was also able to allow several of our staff to throw the first pitch prior to the game.

Delaware State Fair:

Division staff worked throughout the heat at the fair. This year's focus is to save our trees and have a paperless booth. Our theme this year is "A Delaware State Parks Annual Pass is the Hottest Ticket." This theme is in conjunction with the State Fair and DNREC's overall theme.

Operations, Maintenance, & Programming: Ray Bivens reported.

Day Camp enrollment was up 7.3% for the fiscal year. Bellevue experienced a 13% increase and Brandywine Creek's enrollment increased 20%.

The Division will be receiving a \$27,000 grant from the EPA for environmental education curriculum development and the printing of a comprehensive teachers guide.

Revenue from interpretive and education programs exceeded \$542,000 which represents a 16% increase for FY 2010. Programming has grown 82% in the past 5 fiscal years.

Ashley the Siberian Tiger at the Brandywine Zoo died. She was 20 years old and had lived at the Zoo for 15 years. University of Pennsylvania is conducting a necropsy.

The Summer Concert series has seen excellent attendance so far in 2010. One of the 13 concerts scheduled at White Clay hosted 1,100 visitors and thus far in their 25 concerts series, Bellevue has seen very strong numbers. In addition, Killens has 10 concerts scheduled this season and Wilmington has 7 concerts scheduled. There were several corporate sponsors who partnered with

State Parks to ensure the series was successful. Sponsors included: Delaware Blue Rocks, Hockessin Athletic Club, Harrington Raceway, Christiana Care, Inc., now, and A&H Metals Inc.

The Division received a \$10,000 partnership grant to support folk and traditional arts in Delaware State Parks from the Delaware Division of the Arts.

The Division purchased several sections of Mobi-Mat in cooperation with Rehoboth Beach using Land and Water Conservation funds to cover the cost for both the Division and Rehoboth Beach. A Mobi-Mat is an ADA portable and removable roll out access way made of lightweight polyester mesh that allows park visitors to access the beach in their own wheelchairs and park on the mat. The Mobi-Mat also aids those that have difficulty walking in loose sand.

The "kick off" event of the Munch Better program at Killens Pond attracted 500 people. The new menu for the snack bar at the Water Park provides healthy choices and better products. Visitors at the Water Park were surveyed regarding the new menu. The program is being met with mixed reviews however over 50% indicated they like the choices.

A local farmer is providing visitors at Killens the opportunity to purchase fresh produce.

The choices in vending machines were changed in all the southern parks. Current reports are showing greater sales of healthy drinks in the day use areas of the park.

Articles published in several statewide and weekly papers.

There has been an increase in the sale of annual passes since 2009. The increase in sales may be due to the Division's increased marketing initiative. Below are the increases:

Annual Pass 7%
Out-of-State Pass 5%
Senior In-state 5%
Senior Out-of-State 15%
Life Time 15%

<u>Planning, Preservation and Development:</u> Britt Murray provided and discussed a handout (inserted below)

Alapocas Run State Park

The restroom facility located near the CanDo Playground opened to the public on Monday July 26. We experienced some delays from the manufacturer in Kentucky and from Delmarva Power in connecting the electric. Dressing up of the site will be completed when the weather is more conducive to growing grass. Also, a pavilion was constructed immediately adjacent to the restrooms and has been well received by the patrons.

Wilmington State Parks: Brandywine Park

Staff recently met with city officials and potential bidders for an upcoming evaluation and inspection project for approximately 21,000 linear feet of city sewer mains of which a portion exists within Brandywine Park adjacent to the south side of the river. Park staff expressed the need for the awarded contractor to be cognizant of the fact their work will be occurring in a highly utilized portion of the park and the preference to preserve the existing vegetation along the alignment that could be impacted by this work.

The new fountain requested by Charlie Richards of the Friends of Brandywine Park for the center of the Rose Garden has been delivered to the park's maintenance area. The foundation, electric and water connections and installation of the fountain should be completed within the next several weeks.

Bellevue State Park

Work will begin shortly to demolish the Miami Track that experienced severe damage from this winter's snowfall. The straightaway sections will be removed while preserving the 'horseshoe' ends of the covered track. A solid vinyl fence will be installed at the completion of the demolition work to separate the nearby playground and the active horse training area.

Auburn Heights/ Oversee

Black and Veatch, an environmental/civil engineering firm is under contract to the Division of Waste Management, Site Investigation and Restoration Branch in cooperation with the Division of Parks and Recreation to develop the designs and construction documents for the demolition, remediation, wetlands creation and park development of the former NVF properties in Yorklyn to link the current Division landholdings of Auburn Heights and Oversee. Settlement of the property purchase and conservation easements will occur prior to October 31st of this year.

White Clay Creek State Park

Installation of permanent and removable bollards at the northern and southern ends of Tweeds Mill Road south of Wedgewood Road will be completed within the next two weeks eliminating the aesthetically displeasing 'jersey' barriers that have been used to prevent vehicular traffic from using the former road.

Fort DuPont

McKenzie paving has completed the roadway patching along staff lane.

First State Heritage Park

After a delay, awaiting materials and intricate in-shop efforts, work has once again begun on the site of the John Bell House to restore this historic structure located on the Green. Completion anticipated end of August.

Killens Pond State Park

The new band-stage located near the recreation area has been completed and has successfully housed performers for the popular summer concert series.

Work is progressing well for the new nature center exhibits which are scheduled to be completed and installed by the end of October.

Trap Pond State Park

Construction work on the new Nature Center should be completed by the end of August with the installation of exhibits to follow shortly thereafter. Anticipated opening of this beautiful facility will be this fall.

Cape Henlopen State Park

URS, an environmental engineering firm is completing their work to investigate, evaluate, and recommend repairs/replacements for the failing 60 year old sewer collection system for the park. No funds currently exist to implement any of the recommendations.

Park Road @ U of D College of Marine Studies -Project is on hold indefinitely waiting for DelDOT and DNREC to resolve who will own and maintain roadway and the associated standards to be utilized during design and construction.

Delaware Seashore State Park

All work originally planned to be done in renovating the Indian River Marina has been completed. The Café Market, a concession operated by 'Sailfish Caterers', is now operating at the entrance to the floating docks.

Plans are being developed to make various structural repairs and energy conservation/alternative energy upgrades to the South East Day Area Bathhouse along the oceanfront.

DelDOT is making good progress with the new bridge over the inlet and anticipates opening the new bridge to traffic late next summer.

A new pavilion has been erected at Holts Landing State park to replace the former deteriorated structure.

Plans are underway to design an accessible trail, complete with necessary bridges, vista areas, and small parking area, at Thompsons Island Nature Preserve.

V. Old Business

Deloris Donnelly asked about Council appointments and replacing Joan Brown. Chazz stated he hoped to have appointments by the next Council meeting.

VI. New Business

Bob Ehemann provided the handout below and discussed DTF (Delaware Trust Funds).

Program Summary

- Established in 1986 as a matching grant program to assist county, municipal and park districts with park land acquisition and outdoor recreation facility development.
- Administered by the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation, DNREC.
- Annually, income generated from the Trust (Real Estate Transfer Tax) is shared equally among Park, Trails, and Stewardship Programs.
- This year, \$738,000 is available for Park projects. DTF amount will vary from year to year.
- Counties, municipalities, and Park Districts are eligible for DTF grant assistance.
- Municipalities and counties may receive up to fifty percent (50%) in DTF assistance of an approved project's total costs and Park Districts may receive up to seventy-five percent (75%). Local match may come from the sponsor's budget, other grants the sponsor has secured, in-kind sources, and donations.

Eligible Grant Projects

- Fee simple acquisition of parkland, Open Space or conservation areas;
- Purchase of development rights for public parkland, Open Space or conservation areas;
- Outdoor recreation facility engineering and design;
- Replacement of out-dated and unsafe outdoor facilities;
- Outdoor recreation facility construction for example:
 - Athletic fields and courts
 - Playground equipment
 - Swimming pools
 - Picnic tables and pavilions
- Park infrastructure: entrance roads, parking, restrooms, pathways, lighting and landscaping;
- Municipal or countywide park/open space comprehensive plans

Not eligible for DTF Funds

- Indoor facilities
- Park operations and maintenance
- Administration and grant management costs

Long Term Responsibilities

The Sponsor agrees to dedicate the land acquired or improved with Trust Fund assistance to public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity and assumes responsibility for continuing operation, maintenance and stewardship of the property.

- Grant Schedule
- Invitation letters are sent out to all eligible Sponsors.
- On-line Pre-Application describing the project and funding is reviewed by Division Staff. Eligible proposals are classified (Park or Trail) and the appropriate application is sent
- Applications are reviewed and presented to the Park Council for comment/recommendations

DTF Park Program Summary

Assistance granted to: 37 municipalities

3 counties 1 park district

151 completed projects 30 acquisition

8 planning 113 development

26 in-progress projects: 1 acquisition

2 planning23 development

Over \$11M in DTF assistance leveraging \$16.5M in local match

Recently Completed Park Projects

Lewes Canalfront Park Pathway, shelter, parking, landscaping Ocean View John West Park Pavilion, playground, landscaping

Newark Norma B. Handloff Park Ballfield drainage Greenwood Brenda Jones Memorial Park Playground, fencing

Rehoboth Beach Grove Park Fitness stations, playground,

landscaping

Slaughter Beach Pavilion and restroom Pavilion and restroom

Milton Milton Memorial Park Playground, benches, lighting
Dover Dover Park Basketball surfacing, tennis court

fencing

DagsboroKatie Helm ParkShelter, lighting, parkingBellefonteBellefonte ParkPavilion, fencing, benches

Wilmington Brownstown Park Spray Park

VII. Upcoming Events

The next Council Meeting will be held on November 4, 2010 – location to be announced. Ron Mears suggested the meeting take place at the Russell Peterson Preserve.

VIII. Meeting adjournment

Prior to adjourning the meeting Chazz Salkin shared the news that former Council member Joan Brown had been killed in an accident. Council members expressed their concern for the family and shared memories of Joan and her good work for the State.

Mr. Mears asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ron Whittington made a motion to adjourn, Deloris Donnelly seconded the motion. The motion was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Esther Knotts